

Exmoor Tourism Partnership

www.exmoortourismpartnership.co.uk

Co-ordinating, supporting and promoting tourism across Exmoor and West Somerset

Annual Update and Progress Report Spring 2010

Welcome to this first annual update from the Exmoor Tourism Partnership. It is 12 months since the partnership held its first event as an open forum. At this event the industry identified 6 key priorities as shown in the graph below.

Since then the Partnership was launched in July with the active and positive involvement of numerous local trade organisations. The core partners have been meeting regularly every six weeks or so to develop a joint action plan. This provides a

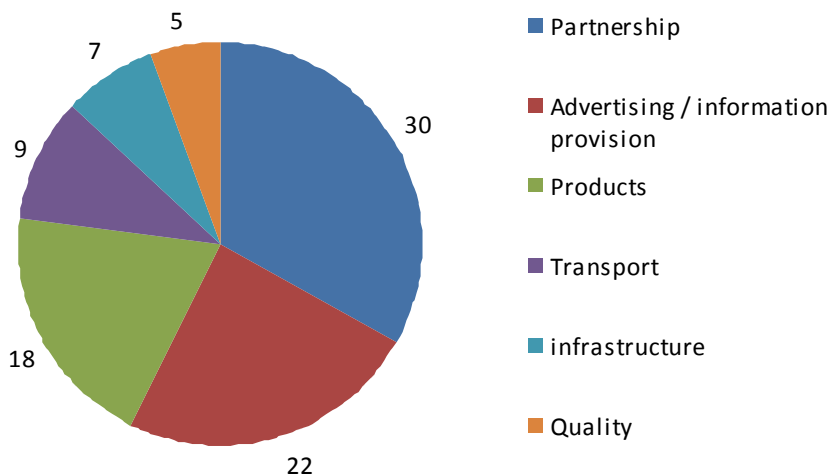
framework for the co-ordinated delivery of tourism support over the next two years, the formative stages of the partnership.

The new action plan is based on the 7 objectives of the Partnership, and also links actions back to the six themes identified by you, the industry.

The Action Plan can now be downloaded via the Exmoor Tourism Partnership website (see back page).

Meanwhile good progress has also been made in delivering a number of the actions and developing the partnership working between the core partners, key organisations and the wider network. This report provides a summary of this progress and the achievements made in the last 12 months.

Priorities, you said...



Partnership working

Partnership working lies at the heart of the new Exmoor Tourism Partnership. It recognises and embraces the many different organisations from both the public and private sectors that have an interest and a role to play in supporting, developing and promoting tourism within the Exmoor and West Somerset area.

The Exmoor Tourism Partnership is not a body in itself but a collaboration between the 4 core partners (Exmoor Tourist Association, Active Exmoor, West Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park Authority) along with key organisations such as North Devon + and the Somerset Tourism Partnership. In addition a fundamental element of the partnership is the wider network of trade organisations working across the area (see details on back page).

It is widely recognised that each organisation has different priorities, different geographical areas of remit, dif-

ferent activities and different approaches to tourism support. However it also recognises that there is a huge amount of commonality and benefits from co-ordinating the work between each organisation. The Action Plan is owned by all partners and is a collection of different priorities and activities taken from each partners own work plans and aspirations.

The Action Plan has helped to secure £160,000 funding towards tourism over the next 2 years from West Somerset Council via the Working Neighbourhoods fund in addition to the councils commitment of £86,000 p.a. towards tourism. Exmoor National Park Authority have launched a tourism support fund of £25,000 a year towards partnership initiatives, in addition to their wider work supporting tourism and recreation in the area worth nearly £200,000 a year. Active Exmoor and the Exmoor Tourist Association have also made significant commitments to implementing the action plan.



Advertising and information provision

Brochure

The end of 2009 was heralded with the arrival of the new look Exmoor 2010 brochure. Generating demand and then delivering some 17 tonnes or 40 pallets of brochures nationally has then been the focus for Active Exmoor since Christmas.

During February over 250,000 households received a mailing from us

Brochure specific promotions have so far been encouraging and by the end of February over 30,000 copies have already been distributed with many more anticipated in the run up to Easter.

By early January we had already generated requests from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Holland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland and the USA!

Press and PR work

During the last year it is estimated that press and media coverage of Exmoor has totalled in excess of £750,000 equivalent advertising value. This is thanks to the sustained efforts of Stacey Beaumont and Clare O'Connor at West Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park Authority, in addition to the engagement of PR guru Pat Edgar of PR Matters who has helped achieve national coverage of Exmoor news and events. Pat has been engaged by the Exmoor Tourist Association with funding from the Exmoor National Park Authority.

Websites

Working together to avoid duplication and add value we have amalgamated accommodation advertising across the three Partnership websites. You can now advertise on visit-exmoor.co.uk, exmoor.com and activeexmoor.co.uk for the price of just one.

Work has been ongoing to improve Visit Exmoor as the 'official' visitor website for Exmoor, managed by West Somerset Council.

The Active Exmoor website has had a refresh too for the year and traffic is already up over 20% on 2009.

E-marketing

Active Exmoor currently email over 8,000 subscribers each month with the latest Active Exmoor News, a very efficient way of driving traffic to their website. Their You Tube videos, Facebook group and blog site also help to attract tens of thousands of hits at a very efficient rate.

A more generic tourism email promotional campaign will be following this lead in 2010 from the ETP.

Over 8,000 people now subscribe to the monthly Active Exmoor e-news

Exmoor Visitor

As we go to press the new edition of Exmoor Visitor is hitting the shelves. The visitor newspaper, produced by the Exmoor National Park Authority, compliments the brochure providing news and event listings for people when they arrive on a visit to Exmoor. 130,000 copies have been printed.

Shows and exhibitions

Over the recent months Exmoor has been represented at a wide range of travel shows and exhibitions. Partners joined together to attend Visit 2010 a new South West based show at the West Point arena near Exeter whilst the Exmoor Tourist Association joined with the West Somerset Railway and others to attend additional events such as the Excursions Group Travel show, and the Manchester Travel Show.



Quality

Stepping Stones and quality in Exmoor

Stepping Stones is a local inspection scheme run by North Devon + and administered by the Exmoor Tourist Association for its members. During 2009 over eighty businesses within Exmoor took advantage of the Stepping Stones inspection. The quality of accommodation on Exmoor is generally very high, usually with small recommendations for improvements during the inspection.

Over 80 Exmoor businesses took advantage of Stepping Stones in 2009.

National Star Rating Review

Work has begun on the process of reviewing the UK wide Common Standards for the national accreditation and star rating systems. The Common Standards bring together accommodation schemes from AA, VisitScotland, VisitWales and VisitBritain (England's National Quality Assessed Scheme for accommodation is now the responsibility of VisitEngland). The review will look at the importance and relevance of the criteria in assessing serviced accommodation in today's digital era.

Products

Events & Festivals

Wassailing the apple trees took place in January with songs, cider and traditions to ensure a fine crop of cider apples.

The Badgworthy Land Co gave access to **Snowdrop Valley**, allowing thousands of people to enjoy one of the first signs of Spring. The Parish council operated the Park and Ride scheme again with support from the Exmoor Sustainable Development Fund.

Looking forward to the new season, **Exmoor Food Festival** has applied for substantial funding, which if successful, will enable us to revitalise the Festival, including the staging of major events on the 2 weekends, but still encompassing the traditional Exmoor meals through the week.

Working with West Somerset's Events Officer, ENPA, West Somerset College youngsters and others, South West Lakes Trust will celebrate it's 10th anniversary at Wimbleball Lake with **Lakefest 2010**, a 3 day event running from 16th to 18th July.

Outdoor Events

Active Exmoor has managed to keep the **walking festival** going for 2010 with financial support from the Exmoor National Park Authority and North Devon AONB Sustainable

With 84 guided walks this Spring the Festival will attract hundreds of visitors and generate over £130,000 for the local economy.

Development Funds . Over 500 tickets have already been sold and the festival is already attracting several international walkers.

Working with the National Park Authority, Active Exmoor also hope to attract up to 300 walkers in this years **Exmoor Perambulation**, now bookable online for the first time.

Major sporting events for 2010!

The **Tour of Britain** will once again be coming through Somerset and Devon and meetings are taking place to discuss how best to maximize the potential of this iconic event.

The **UK Ironman 70.3** triathlon is back this June. New this year is the **South Coast Championships Rowing Regatta**. It is expected to attract up to 2,000 visitors in September with plenty more cycling, fund raising and challenge events lined up for the season.

So far there are 26 major events this year on Exmoor with 22 of them classed as endurance events. Active Exmoor estimate these will generate over £4m for the local economy this year.

More events, activities and festivals online

Space is too limited to be able to cover all events, so please visit www.visit-exmoor.co.uk and www.activeexmoor.com for more information.

Infrastructure

Information Centres

The new **Minehead Visitor Centre** on the seafront has now been open for just over 18months. In the new location there has been a marked increase in summer visitors, especially on Bank Holidays and weekends. A permanent exhibition is on display for the very popular West Somerset Mineral Line Project. With new events planned for Minehead this year, the Centre looks forward to a busy summer.

The ENPA operated **National Park Centres** at Dunster, Dulverton and Lynmouth have had a good year attracting over 170,000 visits since last April and increasing income by 9% helping to provide vital funding towards the provided service.

Independent **visitor centres** are also run at Combe Martin, Lynton, Porlock, South Molton and Watchet,

Google Group

The ETP Google group now has over 50 members and with over 300 postings so far it's a great way to share relevant news and events with fellow tourism businesses at the click of a mouse. You can opt to receive emails as and when they're sent or as a daily or weekly

summary according to your preference. We would encourage more people to join and use this important communications group—full details are available on the Exmoor Tourism Partnership website (details overleaf).

Broadband

Devon and Somerset County Council are jointly working on a project to improve accessibility to broadband for all. Tourism providers on Exmoor were invited to submit data on speeds in a bid to gain accurate information to form the evidence required to help draw down EU funds to help improve broadband coverage and speeds.

Sustainable Development Fund

The Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund, provided by Defra, has continued to provide funding towards a variety of projects during a record breaking year in 2009. Support for tourism related projects has included the new Tall Trees Trail at Nutcombe Bottom, Dovery Manor museum in Porlock, disabled facilities at Wimbleball, restoration of the harbour at Porlock Weir and utilising empty shop fronts in West Somerset to host tourism information in addition to other projects mentioned in this report.

MoorRover

Summer 2009 saw the re-launch of the MoorRover, a demand responsive transport service offering access to areas of the moors not otherwise served by public transport. The scheme, launched by Johnny Kingdom, was a resounding success with significant publicity created. As a result the scheme will continue in 2010 extending coverage across the whole of the National Park. It will be available for group bookings from April to June and available to all from July to the end of September. The service is operated by AtWest with funding from the Exmoor National Park Sustainable Development Fund. www.atwest.org.uk.



In 2010 the Moor Rover will operate across Exmoor July to September and is available for group bookings of 6 or more from April.

on all public transport in addition to some ideas for car free days out and walks utilising public transport. www.exploremoor.co.uk.

Co-ordinated transport information

In addition to the development of Explore Moor work has been ongoing to better co-ordinate transport provision between the two County Councils and the National Park Authority. The Authority's Sustainable Economy Officer recently gave evidence to a parliamentary select committee inquiry into transport and was able to highlight the needs for a nationally significant rural area like Exmoor.

ExploreMoor

The National Park Authority, with assistance from Active Exmoor, have been developing a new car free, care free Exmoor website to be launched in April. The site includes information

Exmoor Tourism Partnership on-line www.exmoortourismpartnership.org.uk

For more information about Exmoor Tourism Partnership you can visit us online.

Press releases, tourism updates and a copy of the Action Plan can all be viewed here along with information about how to join the Google Group, share your views and stay in touch with local tourism the network.

We hope to evolve the website over time to offer more functionality and become more resourceful for you so if you have any suggestions please feel free to send them to us: info@exmoortourismpartnership.co.uk.

Core Partners

Exmoor Tourist Association
www.exmoor.com
01984 633782

Active Exmoor
www.activeexmoor.co.uk
01398 324599

West Somerset Council
www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk
01643 703704

Exmoor National Park Authority
www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk
01398 323665

Key Organisations

North Devon +
www.northdevonplus.com

Somerset Tourism Partnership
www.visitsomerset.co.uk

Exmoor Tourism Network

Minehead Hoteliers Association / Chamber of Commerce

Lynmouth Association for Commerce and Tourism

Porlock Tourism Association

Exmoor (Farm and Country) Holiday Group

Combe Martin Tourism Association

South Molton Tourism Association

Watchet Town Council

Exmoor to Sea (attractions)

Dunster Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Quantock Hills AONB

Your Views! - Your Views! - Your Views! - Your Views! - Your Views!

What are you doing to support tourism in the area? What can be realistically achieved to improve the support we offer to your initiatives? Please let us know your views:

info@exmoortourismpartnership.co.uk. The ETP website also contains direct contact details for core members.

